



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge  
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja  
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

## Press release

### **WUF7: Red Cross Red Crescent calls for greater community engagement in urban planning and development**

**7 April 2014, Medellín** - As the seventh session of the World Urban Forum gets underway, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is urging governments, civil society and international organizations, corporations and other partners to improve collaboration in ensuring real community involvement in urban planning and development.

“Planning and development is a process that must be people-centred. Communities must be central to decision making and legislative processes for development to be effective,” said Walter Cotte, IFRC Under Secretary General for Programme Services Division, who is heading the IFRC’s delegation in Medellín. “A shift is needed towards a focus on real outcomes and impacts, where urban planning and development involves sustained engagement that is explicitly participatory, inclusive and above all, accountable to the people who are at risk,” says Mr Cotte.

The experience of the IFRC’s network indicates that a lack of community engagement, poor access to information, gaps in funding, and weaknesses in the implementation of existing laws and regulations can impede development. This calls for better collaboration between local and national governments with local level actors such as National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which are in a unique position to act because of their auxiliary status to the government.

“Our volunteers are integral to their communities - they live and work in the community, they can relate to local contexts, understand local realities and needs, and are well placed to help find appropriate and sustainable solutions for strengthening community resilience,” said Fernando Jose Cardenas President, Colombian Red Cross Society.

The Red Cross Red Crescent is also promoting for a better understanding of the complexities of land and occupancy rights in urban areas, and is recognizing and supporting more diverse forms of tenure. They are urging governments to review legal frameworks and adequately remove barriers that undermine sustainable development as well as recovery in the aftermath of disasters.

The World Urban Forum gathers a wide range of experts from governments, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, research institutions and academies, the private sector, development finance institutions, foundations, media, the United Nations and other international organizations to examine the most pressing issues facing the world today in the area of human settlements, including rapid urbanization and its impact on cities, communities, economies, climate change and policies.

In total more than 10,000 delegates from around the world are expected to participate in the forum. The Red Cross and Red Crescent will be represented by a delegation of 42 participants.

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*The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest volunteer-based humanitarian network, reaching 150 million people each year through its 189 member National Societies. Together, the IFRC acts before, during and after disasters and health emergencies to meet the needs and improve the lives of vulnerable people. It does so with impartiality as to nationality, race, gender, religious beliefs, class and political opinions. For more information, please visit [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org). You can also connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) and [Flickr](#).*